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types of the prevailing weather for December, January, and February. And the first twelve days of January control the year in like manner.

If it has been rainy for some days, and then clears off in the night, this change, however promising, is wholly unreliable. The weather is not to be considered as settled until the clearing up process is repeated in open day, after which only the condition can be permanent.

Among the great mass of household superstitions may be mentioned a few by way of illustration. If a dish-cloth is dropped on the floor, a visitor may confidently be expected on that day. If a cock crows in the open door, the same result will follow. If any one at table by mistake take an article of food while he has a supply of the same article on his plate, a visitor is at hand who will come hungry.

Dr. Johnson analyzed his dreams in order to discover the undercurrent or bent of his waking thoughts ; so we may analyze, in some degree, even the most absurd or grotesque superstitions, to find on what they are based or from what they arise. If we do this, we shall find that the basis and texture of superstition consist in the following ideas and convictions : that man's destiny is influenced, and in part determined, by hidden powers above and around him ; that he is not, therefore, in his own absolute care and keeping ; that the controlling forces, whatever they are, under which he lives, can foreshadow the future and reveal objects and events to come ; that they thus far transcend the limits of human intelligence, which can hardly see anything in advance, and "knoweth not what a day may bring forth."

J. C. Wells.

CHATTANOOGA, TENN.

BURIAL OF THE WREN. — (See No. xxii., 1893, p. 231.) In reference to the old English custom of the Burial of the Wren, and the discussion relating to this ceremony, in which we have been greatly interested, it may be said, on the authority of Dr. J. Walter Fewkes, that a corresponding rite still exists in Tusayan pueblos, namely, the Burial of the Eagle, a description of which might elucidate the English custom, and of which he hopes hereafter to obtain an account.

A NEGRO BALLAD. — The following rhyme was obtained from an old colored woman in Albemarle County, Va. : —

1. Olde woman, she do me so, —
How wow wow !
Old woman, she do me so, —
How wow wow !
Hooray blow ! how wow wow,
Hooray blow ! how wow wow !
2. She saddle me, bridle me, —
3. She boot me and spur me, —
4. She ride me a fox-hunting, —
5. She ride down hillside, —
6. Old b'ar he clamp me, —

Several nonsense verses follow. The refrain is repeated with each verse.

The following is a plantation song from an old nurse : —

Way away, way away to the wild goose's nation,
All the niggers have to work on the sugar plantation;
Where it 's sometimes sweet and sometimes sour,
Every nigger has to work his own half hour.

Oh, the ladies they use the bergamot's spawn,¹
The nigger has a sweet scent the moment he 's born.
I play upon the banjo, I practise on the horn;
The music 's in the nigger Jim as soon as he was born.

Randolph Meikleham.

ALBEMARLE COUNTY, VA.

NOTE. — The first of the foregoing pieces may be a fragment of a song relating to magic, in which the person speaking is supposed to have been metamorphosed by a witch. — ED.

NOTES ON OLD NEW ENGLAND CUSTOMS. — In reading your articles on the manners and customs of former times, I am reminded of certain things which may perhaps be of interest to your readers.

Mrs. M. F. Hoagland.

200 WEST 52D ST., NEW YORK, N. Y.

1. KEEPING SATURDAY NIGHT. — Fifty years ago, and even at a later date, the good New Englanders kept Saturday night, taking the evening meal before sundown, and so having the work "done up." Just as the sun set behind the western hills, the household disposed itself to reading and quiet, but when Sunday evening came, and the sun had gone down, if there were young women in the family, their beaux came, a circumstance always causing the evening to be looked for with pleasant anticipation.

2. USE OF FENNEL IN CHURCH. — Last summer I visited a church where during my childhood a very tall man and a very small woman occupied the front pew, he leading the singing with unction, while she quietly chewed the fennel, now and then passing a sprig to a neighbor less fortunate than herself; perhaps in order to help them keep awake during the long prayer, which often consumed an hour, or the longer sermon, which frequently required two hours in delivery, more especially if the minister was expatiating on some doctrine. Most of the congregation had come long distances, and therefore waited through a short recess for the afternoon meeting, which gave the good dames an opportunity to sift the gossip of the neighborhood.

3. CHURCH CHOIRS. — These were an interesting feature, consisting of a great bass viol, with from fifteen to thirty singers. When such a choir sang "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne," there was awe and reverence among the worshippers, even although among the singers there might be a quarrel as to who should take the first seat.

4. STOVES IN MEETING. — During the winter, a very prominent object

¹ According to Webster's Dictionary, gardeners call underground roots *spawn*; the sweet-flag has a pungent, aromatic root.